



Before Peter Richardson Hearing February 17, 2000		In Re: U.S. Department of Energy United States Department of Energy	
Page 53		Page 55	
<p>(1) And I am specifically going to make a (2) comment of somewhat of a distress about this (3) particular hearing. It's very difficult to put (4) something into three minutes that is weighing 15 to (5) 20 pounds when it came into the office. (6) So I would encourage the decision makers (7) to be more flexible on the amount of time that (8) people can have. And I was particularly thinking (9) today about, there are some of us who are not white (10) Anglo-Saxon Protestants and don't operate well in a (11) very tight constraining time schedule that's (12) extremely rigid. (13) And I know that, and I just wanted to (14) commend you for going to the Fort Hall Reservation, (15) and I hope that you are culturally sensitive when (16) you do that, to the pressure the time constraints (17) can make on people who are trying to deal with such (18) a complex issue. So that is principle number one. (19) A second and very important principle (20) for the Snake River Alliance and activists, such as (21) ourselves, is do not create more risks by the (22) process that you are establishing. (23) And this particular EIS illustrates that (24) there are at least four or five different places (25) where we are running the risk of creating more risk</p>		<p>(1) fast — just the basic principles, which are (2) cleanup with scare, prioritize the money spent to (3) the risk. Then we heard a lot about money tonight, (4) whether the income is going to be there and whether (5) or not we have a value to cost. (6) Reduce the highest risk first. This is (7) taking into consideration the entire DOE complex at (8) INEEL. This is high-risk waste that does need to (9) be attended to as soon as possible. (10) And lastly, our guiding, over-acting (11) principle, do everything we can to protect the (12) land, the air, the water, from nuclear (13) contamination, especially and particularly in our (14) case, the Snake River Plains Aquifer, and thus, the (15) human environment and all of these pieces. Thank (16) you. (17) MR. RICHARDSON: Thank you for your comment. (18) I remind you that the Department of Energy and the (19) State of Idaho are providing a variety of methods (20) for you to submit your comments. (21) You may submit them in writing. You may (22) drop them off in the comment box. You may submit (23) them over the Internet. You may submit them by (24) telefax. There is no limit on the amount of (25) written comments you may submit.</p>	
Page 54		Page 56	
<p>(1) with what we already have, that there is unproven (2) technology and unsound scientific methods including (3) the plans for where they may dispose of this waste (4) in the long-term. (5) And many of the options are including (6) transportation, which we feel is a risk. The (7) grinding principle for the Alliance, then, is to (8) store the waste as safely as possible in a (9) monitored situation and try not to move it around (10) too much. (11) Another principle is to stop creating (12) more waste. It looks as if — that we need to (13) create further efforts to be aware that we have (14) this mess, because we used a process that we felt (15) was a good idea at the time: reprocessing. (16) And we have now acquired a huge problem (17) that is probably one of the most expensive cleanup (18) jobs that we have in this state and in our (19) neighboring state. (20) And I hope that we will take into (21) account what an important lesson this has been (22) about the use of technology that seems right at the (23) moment, but may not be right later. I'm running (24) out of time. (25) So the last four are going really</p>		<p>(1) And written comments receive the same (2) weight in the record as do oral comments made at (3) this and the other public meetings. If you would (4) like to make an oral comment this evening and (5) haven't had an opportunity to do so, I'd ask that (6) you register at the registration table or, (7) otherwise, just indicate to me that you would like (8) to come up and make a comment. (9) Ms. Allister was our last pre-registered (10) commentator this evening, and I'll note that no one (11) so indicated. So what we will do at this point is (12) take a break, subject to call of the chair, and (13) we'll be off the record. (14) (Brief recess.) (15) MR. RICHARDSON: We'll take the Idaho (16) hearing on the United States Department of (17) Energy's, Idaho High-level Waste and Facilities (18) Disposition Draft Environmental Impact Statement. (19) It's now 8:40 p.m. We're back on the (20) record after a short break, having taken comments (21) earlier. I'd ask if there is anyone in the (22) audience this evening who would like to comment on (23) the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, but who (24) has not yet had an opportunity to do so. (25) We will let the record reflect that none</p>	
Page 53 - Page 56 (16)		Min-U-Script® Tucker & Associates (208) 345-3704	

EIS PROJECT - (AR)/PH- Control # <u>DL-51</u>	
 John A. Kitzhaber, M.D., Governor	
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March 23, 2000	
Mr. Thomas L. Wichman Document Manager, U.S. Department of Energy, Idaho Operations Office 850 Energy Drive, MS 1108 Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401-1563	
Dear Mr. Wichman,	
Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Idaho High Level Waste and Facilities Disposition draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). These comments are submitted on behalf of the State of Oregon. They should be considered as an addition to written comments provided by Ken Niles of my staff at the Portland public meeting on February 22, 2000.	
Our previous comments focused primarily on conditions under which Oregon could potentially consider future treatment of Idaho's high-level waste at Hanford. The comments provided here focus more on the technical elements of the draft EIS.	
We have two overarching concerns with this draft EIS:	
51-1 11.A(3)	• We believe the "mix and match" philosophy of this EIS is inappropriate. Putting together pieces of different alternatives to create a hybrid alternative creates an alternative that has not been analyzed in an integrated fashion in the EIS.
51-2 11.E(2)	• This EIS is too hypothetical to be used as a decision making document. For example, construction on the facilities being considered for Hanford's own use in the Hanford Option will not begin for several years even if they are approved and funded. Final waste dispositions discussed in the EIS rely on facilities still in the research, planning and approval phase. The future existence of these facilities is not certain and is many years away at best. And, these facilities may not be compatible with Idaho waste.
51-3 11.E(2)	• We recommend that Hanford references in this EIS be removed and re-evaluated and the ROD deferred due to the large uncertainties associated with the alternatives being considered.
51-4 11.E(2)	
51-6 11.C(3)	There is another point I would like to make. I am greatly concerned about the manner in which the Portland public meeting was conducted. Although the information provided was fair and understandable, I must object to the rigid format used in conducting the meeting. My staff suggested a less formal format to reflect the small turnout. We were

- New Information -

Idaho HLW & FD EIS

D-121

DOE/EIS-0287

HLW & FD EIS PROJECT - (AR/PF)-
Control # DC-57

told this was not possible because the National Environmental Policy Act required that each public meeting be conducted exactly the same. We do not agree with this interpretation of NEPA's requirements.

Only five members of the public and two members of my staff attended the meeting. One highly interested and knowledgeable individual left her sick child with her husband to come to this meeting because of her passion about Hanford issues. She politely asked to give formal public comment after 90 minutes of presentations because she could not stay for the formal public comment period. She was allowed to give her comment during the question and answer period but was told her comments were not on the record. After giving her comments she was told that her comments were good but she should send written comments if she wanted them on the record. This inflexible approach to public involvement and NEPA serves neither the public nor the U.S. Department of Energy.

51-8
IX.C(5) Oregon Office of Energy staff also suggested a low cost facility which was not used. We are ever vigilant about getting the best possible result for money spent. Please provide the total cost of the Oregon public involvement effort to include meeting room and staff travel costs and per diem. This information will be used in an Oregon report to USDOE on public involvement efforts in Oregon.

More specific technical comments on the draft EIS are attached. Should you have any questions about any of our comments, please contact me at 503-378-5544 or Mr. Douglas S. Huston of my staff at 503-378-4456.

I look forward to seeing how our comments and concerns are addressed.

Sincerely,



Mary Lou Blazek
Administrator,
Nuclear Safety Division
Oregon Office of Energy

HLW & FD EIS PROJECT - (AR/PF)-
Control # DC-57

Oregon Office of Energy Technical Comments on the Idaho High Level Waste and
Facilities Disposition Draft Environmental Impact Statement

- 51-9
III.D.2.C(5) 1. This EIS does not consider all reasonable alternatives. For example, vitrification plants exist and are operating at West Valley and Savannah River. The EIS should examine the alternative of vitrifying Idaho's waste at these locations.
- 51-10
IX.A(5) 2. Section 3.1, "Description of Waste Processing Alternatives," lists five alternatives. Table 3-1 on the next page lists nine alternatives/options. This is confusing and should be clarified.
- 51-11
VII.A(2) 3. As a result of the mix and match philosophy espoused in this EIS, Section 5 should analyze Hanford impacts for the Full Separations Option and Early Vitrification Option.
- 51-12
VIII.C(2) 4. Appendix C.8, Section C.8.3.2, "Water Resources," page C.8-11, "Surface Water," does not discuss Oregon's extensive use of the Columbia River for irrigation, drinking water, electrical power generation, commerce and tourism. We recommend these uses of the river be included in this section, and that the EIS examine and explain the impacts on these uses from the various alternatives being considered.
- 51-14
VIII.D(1) 5. The Hanford alternative is described as having a minimal impact on 52 acres of sage shrub-steppe habitat. However, no consultation was done with the Native American tribes in the area, or with the appropriate federal agencies to support this assertion. As a result of fires in the 1980s, much of this habitat was burned. This has drastically reduced the amount of prime sage shrub-steppe habitat. The State of Washington identifies this habitat as of special concern. It is home to about 17 species which are under consideration for listing as rare, threatened or endangered. As Hanford cleanup proceeds, additional land will be required for processing and cleanup facilities. Even more land will be disturbed as a direct result of cleanup. The EIS fails to consider or analyze the cumulative impacts of all of these activities at Hanford. We recommend these impacts be considered in the EIS.
- 51-16
VIII.C(5) 6. The models used to predict waste migration through the vadose zone and groundwater are overly simplified and fail to consider the broad uncertainties that occur due to preferential pathways and a general lack of understanding of the basic science involved in long term migration of radioactive materials through soil. We recommend that a discussion of these uncertainties be included in this EIS.
- 51-17
VIII.C(4) 7. Mobilization of plutonium and other actinides by the action of vegetative organic decay products such as humic and fulvic acids does not appear to have been considered, or by colloid formation and transport. We recommend these potential impacts be considered in the EIS.
- 51-18
II.E(3) 8. This EIS should discuss how the Hanford Option would be funded and the impacts of the various funding options on Hanford and Idaho cleanup.